

# *Freedom Watch*

*July 24, 2006*

**"Certainly, travel is more than the seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on, deep and permanent, in the ideas of living."**

**- Mirjam Beard**

Army Staff Sgt. David Earle and Sgt. 1st Class Mark Johnson pull security duty before the grand opening of the Sayad Khel Road. Earle is an infantryman with the 1/102 Infantry and Johnson is a civil affairs team sergeant from Bagram PRT.  
Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste, 19th Public Affairs Detachment

**PATROL, from Page 14**

Afghanistan. He said the riots in Kabul May 29 were not representative of the average citizen.

"Very few people in Kabul are like that," he said of the rioters and looters who burned several buildings of Western organizations and stole goods from suspected Western homes and businesses. "Thieves just wanted to take advantage of the situation."

Despite the religious and cultural differences between Afghans and Coalition members, Bashir said, "we are all human beings," and together with the international communities can make Afghanistan a better place to raise his children and grow old. Currently, the average life expectancy in Afghanistan is 47 years.

Platoon leader 2nd Lt. Alex Villanueva said such comments motivate his Soldiers.

"A man told us he was happy to have his freedom," Villanueva said. "Interaction

with the local people helps gives the Soldiers a purpose to be here."

Getting out on foot patrol helps build relationships, said Staff Sgt. Shane Witcher, team leader.

"Getting out, talking and sharing a laugh with them puts a human face to what we're here to do," he said. "We find out that although there are differences between us, there's a lot of commonality as well."

Not only getting to know the locals, but getting to know each other, has been one of the toughest challenges for the unit during this deployment, according to Gump. The security forces unit, formed in 2004, has only 20 members of the original engineer company — the rest are from units scattered throughout the state such as Bakersfield, Los Alamitos, Oxnard, Sacramento and San Luis Obispo.

"We have scouts, cooks, engineers, infantrymen, clerks and several other specialties



**Army Spc. Manuel Navarrate, 315th Engineer Company (SECFOR), stands guard during a recent presence patrol in the capital.**

conducting a mission that they've only recently been trained on," Gump said. "Except for a few Soldiers,

this whole operation is foreign to their training and experience in the Guard."

The captain said operating within a small area — approximately five acres — of Camp Eggers has also presented challenges for his troops.

"It's been a hard transition from our training — especially for some of our Iraqi veterans — to soften our stance," he said. "The military training you receive pushes you into an aggressive and offensive posture whether it's the way you drive or the way you conduct a patrol."

Conversely, lessons learned in Afghanistan have shown that camps and forward operating bases that interact in a supportive role with the local community are far less likely to be targeted by insurgents, he added.



**British Army Lieutenant Will Godwin and Lance Cpl. Steve Dobie, both from the 170th Pioneer Squadron discuss the results of a joint British-American patrol of the capital June 24 with Army Capt. Robert Gump and Army Staff Sgt. Shane Witcher, both from the California National Guard's 315th Engineer Company (SECFOR).**





Photos by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Matt Summers

Army Staff Sgt. Shane Witcher and Army 2nd Lt. Alex Villanueva, both from the 315th Engineer Company (SECFOR), hand out candy and school supplies to an Afghan boy during a recent presence patrol in the capital.

## Californians unite to keep Kabul safe

By Air Force Tech Sgt.

**Matt Summers**

**Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan  
Public Affairs**

**KABUL, Afghanistan** -- Some Kabul residents said they haven't seen foreign soldiers on foot in the city since Russian troops left in 1989. At first glance, this might seem like a good thing. But, when one considers Coalition troops have been stationed in the capital city since 2002, not as invaders, but liberators, it's a positive sign.

A new approach to how Coalition troops operate in Kabul was born out recently during a joint presence patrol made by U.S. and British troops. Instead of using armored vehicles, they used good old-fashioned shoe leather.

Members of the 315th Engineer Company (Security Forces), made up of more than 100 California National Guard

members from throughout the state, are stationed at Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan headquarters at Camp Eggers in Kabul. They joined their British counterparts for a walk through small and large neighborhoods, past business districts and through narrow alleyways — constantly on the lookout for anything unusual.

"We want to ensure the Afghan people know we are here as protector and not an occupying force," said Capt. Robert Gump, 315th EC commander. He said by interacting with the public, his Soldiers hope to be viewed much like a local cop on the beat.

"The local populace will get to know us as people," he said.

The British forces, who took over the leadership role for the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul in May, agree.

"The patrols reassure the residents that we are here and that they can feel safe," said British Army Lance Cpl. Steve Dobie, a team commander with the Territorial Army's 170th Pioneer Infantry Squadron. "Loads of them are quite happy that we are here."

The joint patrol is just one of the duties performed by the Californians. The Guardsman also provide garrison security by manning several entry control points to Camp Eggers. Soldiers provide security for Coalition personnel living in "safe-houses" near the installation and perform their own "presence patrols" by going out into the community for short visits with Kabul residents.

During a recent visit to a market, a storekeeper named Bashir said the American presence is vital to stabilizing the security in the capital and throughout

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# Soldiers use extra job to express opinions, humor

**By Army Staff Sgt. Nicholas Lutton**  
**345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

## JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan --

There are many stories to be told here and Army Spc. Hollie Chapman has made it her mission to do just that.

Chapman wears other hats beside storyteller, however. She is an administration specialist working in base operations and covers extra duties for soldiers on leave for the 219th Area Support Group based in Indiana.

The job that takes up most of her time is putting together the weekly newspaper, "The JAF Weekly Dime," which she writes for service members at JAF.

"It is one of the hardest things I've ever had to do," said Chapman. "It is very time consuming. You really have to get out there and talk to people. Most of the time

I'm stuck behind a desk."

Chapman and Army Sgt. Maite Buckingham, who is with the 183rd Aviation Unit from Idaho in JAF, work together and apply a sense of humor in covering stories, taking pictures and putting together the newsletter.

"I think it is a great way to speak your mind and it is informative for the soldiers. I think it has boosted morale," said Buckingham.

The two Soldiers created a column entitled "Rumors of the Week." The column covers everything from mountain lions roaming the base and a streaker near a guard tower, to the possibility of JAF getting swimming pools for Soldiers.

"It is cool when people come up to you and talk about your work," said Chapman.

Chapman was originally assigned the duty by her command, and in the four times



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

**Army Sgt. Maite Buckingham, left, and Army Spc. Hollie Chapman, display copies of "The JAF Weekly Dime." The two Soldiers developed the weekly newsletter which has served as a source of information and humor for Soldiers at Jalalabad Airfield.**

she has created the newsletter, it has had a great response.

"My favorite story was on the band, The Vinyltones, who visited Jalalabad for a concert. I had to use (a web site) to interview the band," said Chapman.

As the JAF Soldiers visit the dining facility, most of them stop to check out the paper

stacked on a table near the exit. One Soldier looks to Chapman, who is eating her meal close by, and says, "Are we really getting a swimming pool?"

Chapman erupted in laughter, obviously amused by the far-fetched rumor she had inspired. It's just one more reason for her to continue writing.

## POSTAL, from Page 12

The combined total of all incoming and outgoing mail processed here is a staggering average of 20,000 pieces per month.

"We process a lot of mail," said Army Sgt. Danny D. Exley, NCO of post office operations attached to the 458th. "And one of the things we're really proud of is that mail is now turning around in nine to 12 days."

For these engineers turned postal workers, they all agree their favorite part of the job is interacting with the customers.

"My favorite part about the job is seeing that one guy who comes up and says 'Oh great! My box is in' because people tend to be happy when mail comes for them," said Minnich. "It's cool to see the look on their faces. It makes the job seem worth it. We usually don't see too many of those because mail clerks pick up the mail for their section."

The Soldiers who work in the post office share a genuine commitment to performing their job with excellence.

Customer service is their number one priority and they go beyond what is required to ensure packages and letters are handled with care.

"I take special care with the items Soldiers mail," said Army Spc. Teresa S. Corlew, mail clerk with 568th Personnel Service Detachment, Nashville, Tenn. "I love the look on Soldier's faces when they see how much effort I put into making sure what they're sending gets to where it's supposed to and remain perfectly in tact."

Post office customers and operators will benefit from a new building designed for greater organization and efficiency to accommodate the FOBs increasing postal demands.

"We're getting a new post office built, which should be ready for move-in any day

now," said Minnich. "We're really excited about the new place. It will have better workstations and be more user friendly."

There is an unmistakable atmosphere of teamwork and synergy among the postal workers here.

"It's a long deployment and we spend most of our time at work," said Anderson. "We're lucky, because we all get along great and it really helps to like the people you have to work with, especially in this environment."

For most units who work together in a combat zone, the team mentality eventually diminishes as the rotation wears on. However, the postal team on FOB Salerno is different from most other units and continues to maintain positive professional relationships with seemingly natural ability.

"It's not a burden to help each other out, it's a pleasure," said Corlew, "and that is rare."



# Soldier proves dedication to Army

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -

- On July 11, Army Sgt. Justin Petrone almost lost his life in a landmine explosion as he worked on a new bypass on the north end of Bagram.

On July 13, Petrone was not in the hospital recuperating from his injuries. Rather, the Task Force 27 heavy equipment operator returned to the site of the accident to raise his right hand and commit another six years of his life to the Army.

Petrone repeated word-for-word as Army 1st Lt. Chad Alexander, his platoon leader, read the Oath of Enlistment. Many of his 27th Engineer (Combat Airborne) Battalion comrades watched as Petrone swore to honor and serve his country for a second time.

Afterward, among hugs and handshakes, those same battle buddies spoke of Petrone with admiration.

It was no surprise when he decided to reenlist. No doubt he will continue to exemplify what it means to be Airborne, Alexander said.

"He's an inspiration and a hero. His decision to reenlist is good for the entire Army," said Army Pfc. Michael Oswald,



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

**Army Sgt. Justin Petrone, left, shakes hands with his platoon leader, Army 1st Lt. Chad Alexander, who reenlisted him two days after Petrone nearly lost his life in a landmine explosion.**

who has been under Petrone's supervision for five months.

While some spoke of Petrone's leadership and motivation, others spoke of his ability to remain composed in stressful situations.

"After the accident, as he lay there totally calm, all he asked for was a cigarette,"

said Army Sgt. Tod Hook, Petrone's squad leader.

Although he accepted his congratulations graciously, Petrone seemed to not understand what all the fuss was about.

"I've been in the Army a long time," said Petrone. "I will be in the Army for life. Nothing will stop me."

## Engineer Soldiers handle unexpected mission as postal clerks

By Army Sgt. Victoria Willoughby

345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan** -- When Soldiers from the 458th Combat Engineer Battalion, Pittsburgh, Pa., received the call to mobilize last February that was one thing, but to be told they would be doing a job unrelated to their occupational specialty was something entirely different.

"When we first found out we weren't going to be doing engineer work, we weren't too crazy about it," said Army Staff

Sgt. Robert J. Carpenter, non-commissioned officer in charge of the post office here. "But it actually hasn't been bad at all," said the Pittsburgh native.

The Soldiers received postal training at Fort McCoy, Wis., prior to deploying that prepared them for running a post office in a combat zone.

"They sent us to an abbreviated three-week school where we learned about everything from inspecting and sending mail, to distribution and claims," said Carpenter.

"The instructors told us to pay close attention when we get there, because we are probably going to have to figure a

lot of it out ourselves," said Army Sgt. Todd E. Minnich, custodian of postal effects with the 458th.

When the engineers arrived at FOB Salerno in mid-March, they were given additional hands-on training by the unit they replaced.

"We learned a lot from the group that was here and how they ran things," said Carpenter. "We had on-the-job training for a couple of weeks before they left, so that helped us a lot."

Among the many challenges the Soldiers faced when they took over postal operations, was adjusting to the unpre-

dictable mail shipment size and schedule.

"The main challenge is getting the mail in and out," said Carpenter. "Sometimes there's nothing and sometimes you'll get swamped, but you never know when it's going to hit. We're also pretty short on manpower so that makes those times a little harder to manage."

The post office here receives approximately 100,000 pounds of mail per month and outgoing mail averages 60,000 pounds per month. The numbers of packages using customs forms are about 1,500.

**See POSTAL, Page 13**

# Aviators aspire to make OEF mission successful

**By Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste**  
**19th Public Affairs Detachment**

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD,**  
**Afghanistan** -- Operation Enduring Freedom cannot be successful if it comes to standstill. If supplies aren't being transported and troops aren't being moved, resources dwindle, and the mission becomes a failure.

Because of people in units like Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment "Buccaneers" and the UH-60 Black Hawks they fly, that scenario will never become a reality.

"Our mission success is critical to the success of the mission here in Afghanistan as a whole," said Army Capt. Darin Gaub, commander of B Co., 2-10 Aviation. "We're here to support everyone we can. We move mail, medical supplies, mechanicals parts, general supplies, personnel and some-time VIPs to wherever they are needed."

The people who transport troops, supplies and VIPs are people like Warrant Officer Michael Bobkoskie, a maintenance officer for the 2-10 who maintains the helicopter as well as flies it.

"Pilots have a demanding schedule and time consuming tasks," Bobkoskie said. "All of our pilots are very qualified to do what they do."

Both pilots, and the helicopters they



Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

**Soldiers at Jalalabad Airfield refuel a UH-60 Blackhawk just after members of Bravo Co. 2-10th Aviation Regiment deliver needed parts there.**

fly, would never lift off the ground if it wasn't for the constant inspection and work of the Buccaneer's maintainers.

"The maintenance is continuous," said Army Sgt. Douglas Wilay, a crew chief with 2-10.

Maintainers like Wilay prep the aircraft prior to flight, do the necessary maintenance when the aircraft returns from its mission and performs maintenance on other idle aircraft to ensure mission capability for upcoming flights.

It's the effort that every member of the Buccaneers puts into their working together to accomplish one mission that makes accomplishing such an important goal a success, Gaub said.

Operation Enduring Freedom would not be a success without the hard work of all the service members here, according to Gaub.

The crew chiefs, pilots and maintainers of 2-10 Avn. all work together over many long hours to ensure the unit succeeds in its part of the overall mission, he said.



## PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

**Republic of Korea Army Capt. Junsik Kim, middle, of the Korean Engineer Group Civil Engineer Company, supervises the construction of a K-Span, giving directions to the crane operator while the soldiers assemble the panels from the top.**

Photo by Republic of Korea Armt Capt. Jonghwa Oh, 100th Engineer Group

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to [freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil](mailto:freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil). Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



# 'Ammo' Airmen arm Bagram warfighters

**By Air Force Maj. David Kurle**  
*455th Air Expeditionary Wing*  
*public affairs*

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** - Bombs, bullets and explosives are hazardous to friend and foe alike, but are handled with care by the men and women who work in the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron's Munitions Flight.

Known as "ammo" troops, the Airmen of the munitions flight handle all of the bombs, ammunition, defensive ordnance, explosives and bullets used by the Air Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom here.

"Without ammo, the A-10 would be just a flying observation platform," said Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Brad Wilson, assistant flight superintendent. "You wouldn't have security forces out there with loaded weapons; they'd be using sticks and stones."

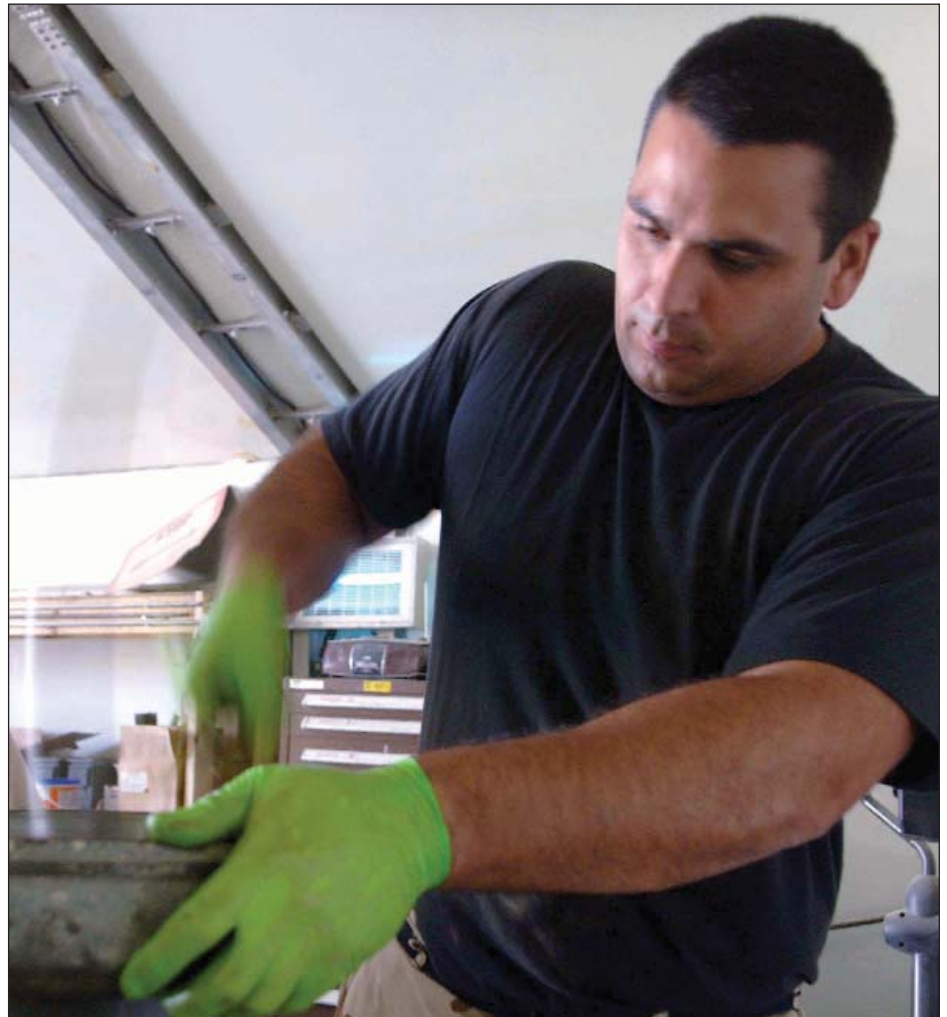
The munitions flight takes charge of all ordnance until it leaves Bagram, either on an aircraft or in the magazine of a firearm, according to Wilson, an Air Force reservist deployed from the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

The flight receives ordnance from supply points, inspects it; stores it; combines different components to build it, for bombs and missiles; then delivers it where it needs to go, whether to the flight line or for individual issue, in the case of small arms.

"If you don't inspect it, it could be damaged in such a way that it won't work as expected," Wilson said. "We don't want to put something out there that will hurt someone or something that won't function."

In addition to the 442nd, members of the 52nd Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, and the Kansas Air National Guard's 184th Air Refueling Wing also work in the munitions flight.

"I think our crew has been pretty well integrated," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Josh Brewster, a munitions specialist from the 52nd Fighter Wing. "And, from what I've seen on the flight line, they've meshed



Photos by Air Force Maj. David Kurle

**Staff Sgt. James McCall uses a mallet to install a bearing assembly into the wheel of a trailer used to transport bombs and other ordnance. He and other munitions flight members receive, inspect, store, assemble and deliver munitions for use on aircraft and small arms.**

pretty well out there too."

Watching the integration of active duty and reserve, then accomplishing the mission is the best part about being deployed, said Air Force Staff Sgt. James McCall, also a munitions specialist, and a reservist from the 442nd.

However, working in ammo is not all bombs and bullets. The Ammo troops also maintain auxiliary equipment, such as trailers used to transport ordnance.

"I don't know too many guys in munitions who like doing trailer maintenance," Wilson said. "But it's one of those jobs that have to be done."

All the ammo troops in the 455th need to be proficient, and proficiency comes

from training and actually performing their war-time tasks repeatedly at their home units, with some differences.

"It pretty much feels like working back home, except that we're not building BDU-33s," said Master Sgt. Leroy Williams, referring to training munitions dropped by the A-10s of the 442nd FW when they're not deployed. "It's interesting knowing that your end result here in Afghanistan is helping out our troops on the ground."

Pride comes from knowing they are getting those bombs and bullets out there to help the warfighters.

"When ammo works, it's because we did our job," said Wilson."



Photo by Air Force Maj. David Kurle

**(Above)** An A-10 Thunderbolt II prepares to touch down on Bagram Airfield's runway after completing a combat sortie.  
**(Left)** The 30mm gattling gun on the front of the A-10 Thunderbolt II is an imposing weapon.

# strikes insurgents in Afghanistan

makes its presence known.”  
The A-10 squadron here on Bagram is basically a “911” force for the Coalition and International Security Assistance Force troops around the entire country, Kurle said.  
When a “911 call” comes in, the A-10 squadron is ready to launch.  
“We have two kinds of close air support activity,” said Kurle. “One is pre-planned, where the pilots know the exact target before even stepping on the plane. The other is as-requested. There are A-10’s in the air around the clock, so when the Coalition or ISAF service members need an air strike, the pilots are on it.”  
An air strike does not mean the A-10 pilots carelessly drop bombs and spray bullets, however.

“We’re talking about precision guided weapons being used on military targets,” Kurle said.  
The twin-engine jet, which has the capability to fire 3,900 rounds a minute and carry 1,600 pounds of bombs and missiles, is highly maneuverable and extremely accurate.  
“It’s saving lives,” said Air Force Tech Sgt. Scott Avery, assigned to the 442nd Fighter Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. “You get (military) personnel pinned down in combat and this plane goes to work. Sometimes, the A-10 is the only thing between life and death for those guys.”  
Additionally, the aircraft is doing its part to establish a secure and stable environment for the people of Afghanistan.  
“Right now, extremists are trying to destroy any kind of hope for the future,” Kurle said. “If we can put an airplane in the sky that provides extra security for the Afghans, then it’s going to help in the long run.”



Photo by Air Force Maj. David Kurle

**Air Force Col. Tony Johnson, an A-10 pilot, prepares to fly an A-10 Thunderbolt II on a combat sortie over Afghanistan. Johnson is assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing.**





Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

**Air Force Staff Sgt. Lincoln McCoy prepares to load ammunition onto the A-10 Thunderbolt II. McCoy is assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing on Bagram Airfield.**



Photo by Air Force Maj. David Kurle

## A-10 Thunderbolt II

**By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry  
19th Public Affairs Detachment  
BAGRAM AIRFIELD,**

**Afghanistan** -- Soldiers conducting combat operations throughout Afghanistan have a powerful friend watching their back – the Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II, an aircraft created specifically to provide close air support for troops on the ground.

“The A-10 is the Air Force’s most technologically advanced aircraft,” said Air Force Maj. David Kurle, a public affairs officer assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary

**“The A-10 is a brawler; it hits the face and definitely makes its presence**

*Air Force Maj. David Kurle  
455th AEW public affairs officer*

Wing. “Like the B-2 bomber, it is designed to go in, strike a target and leave the area without anyone knowing it was there. However, the A-10 is a barroom brawler; it hits the enemy in the face and definitely

# Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld awards Purple Heart to wounded Soldiers

**By Army Sgt. Mayra Kennedy**  
**345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

**KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** -- Two Soldiers from Task Force Warrior were presented with the Purple Heart here July 11 by U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Task Force Warrior Soldiers, from 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Polk, La., survived an improvised explosive device strike while supporting Operation Mountain Thrust in Zabul Province.

On April 18, Army Spc. Louis Acevedo, 21, was conducting a mission with fellow Soldier, Spc. James Allen, 21, when their Humvee was struck by an IED.

"I spotted a guy far away and told the squad leader," said Acevedo, from Puerto Rico. "He told me to keep an eye on the man, but by the time I turned my head we got hit."

He was thrown up in the air from his position as turret gunner in the tactical vehicle and landed on his back on top of the turret.

Acevedo said his first reaction was to get out of the vehicle and fight back, but when he tried to walk he fell on the ground and was unable to move.

Allen, also a gunner, was in the back right seat of the same vehicle. He said the explosion wasn't very loud, but the impact was something he didn't expect.

"We had joked about having bad feelings about the convoy and then the IED blew up," said Allen, from Ypsilanti, Mich. "I was on fire. Actually my pants were on fire. The Humvee was completely melted."

Both Soldiers received lacerations, burns and bruises, but were able to survive such a traumatic experience without any major injuries.

"It feels nice after being here in country to receive such an award," said Acevedo. "And getting it from the Secretary of Defense makes it even better. Not everybody can say that."

During the ceremony, Rumsfeld told TF



Photo by Army Sgt. Andre' Reynolds

**Army Spc. James Allen receives a Purple Heart from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on July 11 during the secretary's visit to Qalat's Provincial Reconstruction Team. Allen, from Ypsilanti, Mich., was severely burned on his legs after his patrol vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device while conducting a mission in Qalat.**

Warrior Soldiers not to forget that the job they are doing in Afghanistan is significant to all Americans.

"All of you decided that it was important to serve your country," he said. "You are doing it and you are doing it successfully"



# Parwan village opens bridge into future

By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry  
19th Public Affairs Detachment

**SALANG DISTRICT, Afghanistan** -- The new Nawaj Bridge in the Salang District of Parwan Province is not just a way to connect the people of remote villages to roads and bazaars, it's also a way to connect them to the future.

"We upgraded a rickety, old foot bridge to a vehicle bridge with the expectation of expansion," said Army Capt. Don Johnson, Parwan Team Leader, Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team. "We aren't just thinking about what is needed today, we're also thinking of what will be needed tomorrow."

Members of the Bagram PRT, officials from the Parwan government, and many local villagers celebrated the grand opening of the new bridge July 11 in the Salang District.

This will help economically by providing access to shops and bazaars. It will also help children get to school and it paves the way for vehicle traffic to the village, said Gulam Sedeeq Sedeeq, the deputy governor of the Parwan Province.



Photo by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry  
**Air Force Lt. Col. Donald Koehler, center, smiles as Parwan Deputy Governor Gulam Sedeeq Sedeeq cuts the ribbon during the grand opening of the Nawaj Bridge in the Salang District.**

The bridge is just a stepping stone in the reconstruction of the Parwan Province.

"The (National Solidarity Program) built five kilometers of roads up in the village. A minor project will link the bridge to those roads," Johnson said.

The people in the village are eager to add to the bridge project. They have the time

and knowledge to build a road that will connect thousands of families to the main road, he added.

"It's just one step at a time in rebuilding the infrastructure," said Johnson. "Projects like this remind people that the Coalition and their government are looking out for them. It gives them hope."

## State Department representatives visit Salerno

By Army Spc. Amber Robinson-Sonoda  
Task Force Spartan  
public affairs

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan**—State Department representatives for Afghanistan recently visited here to spend time with Task Force Spartan team members and tour the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team's headquarters.

The representatives received a short brief on the task force brigade's operations in Afghanistan, including information on security issues, humanitarian progress and public relations. They were then escorted to the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team Headquarters. Once the State Department

members completed their initial Task Force Spartan meeting,

PRT members provided their guests lunch with the team's Soldiers and Sailors. Promptly afterwards, the team had a meeting on the PRT mission in Khost and where the team stands on progress.

"We wanted to provide the State Department members with an up close snapshot on what we do on a day to day level," said Navy Cmdr. John Wade, Khost PRT commander.

Soldiers and representatives discussed a number of issues including Khost economic development, counter-insurgency methods and social progression.

"We discussed our current goals as a reconstruction team

and what our desired end state will be," said Wade. "We expressed our desire to continue to help resolve Khost governmental and reconstruction issues as the

Afghans move toward a more stable and peaceful nation."

The State Department visitors discussed the strategic

mission in Afghanistan while the PRT Soldiers introduced their tactical solutions.

"These representatives work in Kabul and oversee much of our mission planning and cost management," said Wade. "It is good for them to get a personalized view of mission execution."

Deputy assistant secretaries of state who visited included: John Gastright, Virginia Palmer, David Kilcullen, Meghan Bradley and Dan Green, who is the PRT officer based in Kabul.

"This was a great opportunity to demonstrate our inter-agency partnership with the Afghan people in our attempt to strengthen and influence the Afghan government," said Wade.

**"This was a great opportunity to demonstrate our inter-agency partnership with the Afghan people..."**

Navy Cmdr. John Wade  
Khost PRT commander

# Laghman capital to get new municipal building

By Air Force Capt.

Gerardo Gonzalez

**Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team**

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE MEHTAR LAM, Afghanistan** -- Laghman Provincial Governor Golab Mangal presided over a ground-breaking ceremony July 5 marking the start of a construction project on a new municipal building.

The building, sponsored by the Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team, will also serve as the provincial emergency operations center and a public information bureau where citizens can learn about local government initiatives.

"The PRT is doing great things to improve the lives of the provincial people and we are grateful for that," said Governor Mangal. "We look forward to working with the new PRT commander and expanding more projects outside of Mehtar Lam."

Governor Mangal also expressed his gratitude about other on-going PRT initiatives in the city, such as the city electricity plant and a water tank project that will bring potable water to various neighborhoods.

Mehtar Lam City Mayor Qasim Ahmadi praised the \$120,000 initiative and said the new building with its 22 rooms will minimize current logistical problems, allowing him and his staff to better focus on managing the city on behalf of the people.

"Today we can place the first rock on the



Photo by Air Force Capt. Gerardo Gonzalez

**Air Force Lt. Col. Brad Bredenkamp, Mehtar Lam Provincial Reconstruction Team commander, cuts the ribbon during a ceremony marking the start of a project to build a new municipal building in Mehtar Lam City, as Laghman Provincial Governor Golab Mangal, (left), observes.**

ground for this building thanks to the PRT," said Mayor Ahmadi.

Plans call for the new building to house a provincial emergency operations center for use during natural disasters or other province-wide emergencies. The center is slated to connect with Afghan National Police substations in outlying areas with the aim of improving coordination and security efforts.

"Reconstruction cannot happen without effective security," said Air Force Lt. Col.

Brad Bredenkamp, Mehtar Lam PRT commander, during the ceremony attended by national, provincial and city leaders.

The colonel lauded the project because it will improve the capacity for city government to serve the people—a key issue.

"When the government serves the people, it improves security and strengthens stability within the province," he said.

The new municipal building will take approximately six months to complete and is being built by Afghan contractors.

## Terrorist leader detained, weapons cache discovered

**Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan**

**News Release**

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** -- Afghan National Army and Coalition forces detained a terrorist leader and seized a large weapons cache south of Kunduz near the village of Baghlan on July 16.

Amir Gul Hassanyar, an area terrorist leader, was detained by elements of the 2nd Kandak, 1st Brigade, 209th ANA Corps, and Coalition forces during a cor-

don and search of a compound. Amir Gul Hassanyar is believed to be responsible for numerous attacks using improvised explosive devices, trafficking in illegal weapons and drugs, and engaging in other anti-Coalition and anti-Government of Afghanistan activities.

A detailed search of the compound where Amir Gul Hassanyar was found resulted in the discovery of 500 17mm high-explosive rounds, 80 kilograms of ammonium nitrate, 153 rounds of 82 mm mortar rounds, 42 rocket-propelled

grenade rounds, 600 rounds of small arms ammunition, six anti-personnel mines, one 50 pound plastic explosive bomb, one white Toyota Corolla vehicle, and six Afghan National Police uniforms.

"Gul is a threat to the people and the government of Afghanistan," said Col. Thomas Collins, Coalition spokesperson. "Receiving and disposing of these weapons reduces the danger posed by extremists who would use them to harm innocent civilians and Afghan and Coalition forces."



# Technical center quenches thirst for knowledge

## Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan News Release

**KABUL, Afghanistan** -- The Ministry of Interior took a successful leap toward continuing education and training with the opening of the Technical Information Center recently on the MOI compound.

"This is one of the many ways Afghans can rebuild our history," said Col. Noor Mahak, TIC manager.

The TIC is open to all MOI employees and authorized visitors. Patrons must register for a TIC card in order to check out books.

Already a popular destination, the information center is organized and cataloged according to subject and language. Primarily comprised of books about civil and international law, other subjects available are international religion, psychology, business, mathe-

matics, politics, language, history, computer science, engineering and management.

The books are written in Dari, Pashto, Persian and some English and other languages. "The Taliban had burned most books they came in contact with, but we have recovered priceless gems through imports and donations," said Capt. Juma Khan, deputy TIC manager.

From poetry to English literature, professional readings to religious enlightenment, the TIC can inspire a nation of people to become more than just thinkers, but a nation of proactive citizens.

On an average day, attendance at the information center is high. But the women of Afghanistan seem to be the consistent bookworms here. "What was once forbidden by the Taliban is now commonplace," said Mahak. "It is everyone's right to further edu-



Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Angelique McDonald

## The Technical Information Center is open to all Ministry of Interior employees and authorized visitors.

cation and information. This is why the Technical Information Center is open."

The TIC study materials increase understanding of constitutional, civil and international law and human rights and are the keys to enduring reform, reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan.

"My job is to protect the books and make sure that everyone is given the opportunity to share the knowledge

provided in this building," said Mahak.

The center, originally built to encourage professional development of a national police service fully committed to the rule of law and respectful of civil society institutions, has now become more. The TIC is symbol of a more educated and informed Afghanistan, ready to embrace a future of peace and stability throughout the nation.

## Enduring Voices

*What have you accomplished here that you are most proud of?*



**Army Pvt.  
Jonathan Johnson**  
Bagram Airfield

*"Gaining knowledge of the Army. I'm a guard, so it was interesting learning what is expected and what is not."*



**Army Spc.  
Geoffry Bailey**  
Bagram Airfield

*"Staying out of trouble."*



**Army Staff Sgt.  
Gregg Blakeley**  
Bagram Airfield

*"Taking care of the Soldiers under me so they can get their missions done."*



**Air Force 1st Lt.  
Mark Sakai**  
Bagram Airfield

*"Giving Afghans infrastructure to help them progress."*

# An open letter to the people of Afghanistan

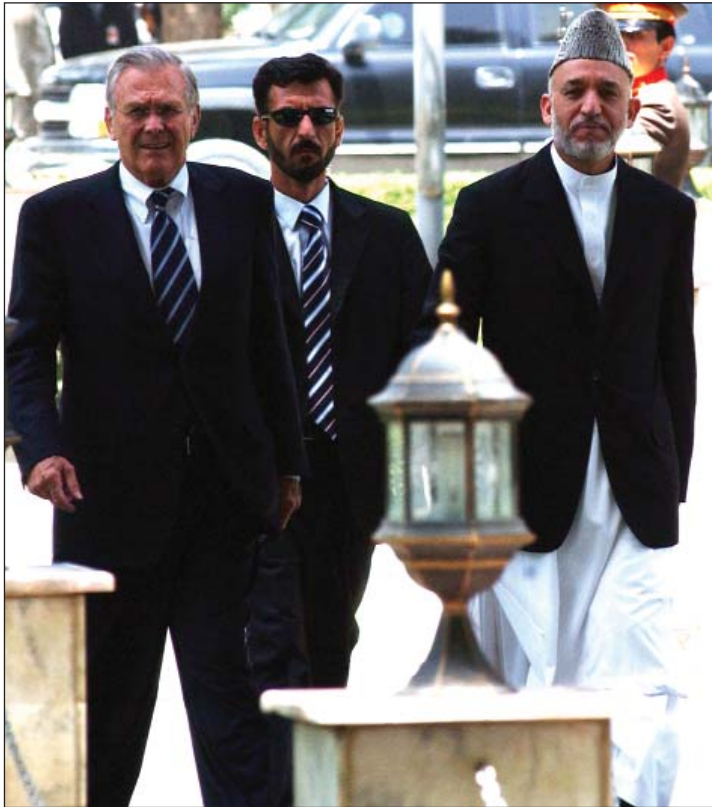


Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Matt Summers

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, left, and Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, right, prepare for their joint press conference during Rumsfeld's recent visit here.

## To the People of Afghanistan:

I recently made my 11th visit to Afghanistan, where I met with President Hamid Karzai, members of his Cabinet, the Governor of Zabul Province, and with U.S. troops. I came away impressed by their determination and the progress that has been made on the political, economic, and security fronts.

The United States maintains its strong commitment to Afghanistan's success. The increased involvement of forces from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will add to — and strengthen — U.S. and Coalition contributions. In fact, with NATO, Afghanistan will have the support of not only the United States, but 25 new friends, each committed to success for the Afghan people.

It is sometimes easier to see the progress being made from a distance. It is clear to most outside observers that Afghanistan has come far since its liberation in 2001. One of the Afghans I spoke with told me that during the Soviet Union's occupation, schools were closed and two generations of Afghans were denied the opportunity to go to school. It is important to remember how much you have overcome and how much you have accomplished.

May the coming year bring you even greater success in building a future of hope and opportunity for you and for your children. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership.

Sincerely,  
Donald H. Rumsfeld

## Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



## Afghan cultural tidbit

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste, 19th Public Affairs Detachment

### How are you?

#### Dari

Chi-hal darid?  
(Chee-hawl dah-rid?)

#### Pashtu

Sa-hal da?  
(Saw-hawl dah?)

**Afghan bread comes in slabs, or in round flat loaves (not to be confused with the now commonly sold Middle Eastern pita bread) that have been baked in large clay ovens called tandoors. Afghan bread is generally available in Middle Eastern grocery stores and in mainstream grocery stores in cities with large Afghan populations.**



Army Maj. Dave Waddell, Army 2nd Lt. Dave Carattini, Army 2nd Lt Nick Rowland and Army Sgt. 1st Class Forrest Boatman, prepare equipment for a sling-load mission. The riggers are all assigned to the 277th Aviation Support Battalion.

Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Luis Rodolfo Heredia, 277th ASB



Cover: Army Spc. Robert Hill, 315th Engineer Company (SECFOR), talks apples with an Afghan boy during a recent presence patrol in Kabul. Hill is serving a one-year tour at Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan headquarters at Camp Eggers in Kabul.

Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Matt Summers

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## **Afghanistan Freedom Watch**

*Freedom Watch* is a weekly publication of Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan.

CFC-A Commander Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry  
Public Affairs Officer Col. Thomas Collins

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Deadline for submissions is 0730 Zulu each Friday. All submissions are subject to editing by the 19th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Bldg. 415, Room 205, Bagram Airfield. We can be reached at DSN 318-231-3338.

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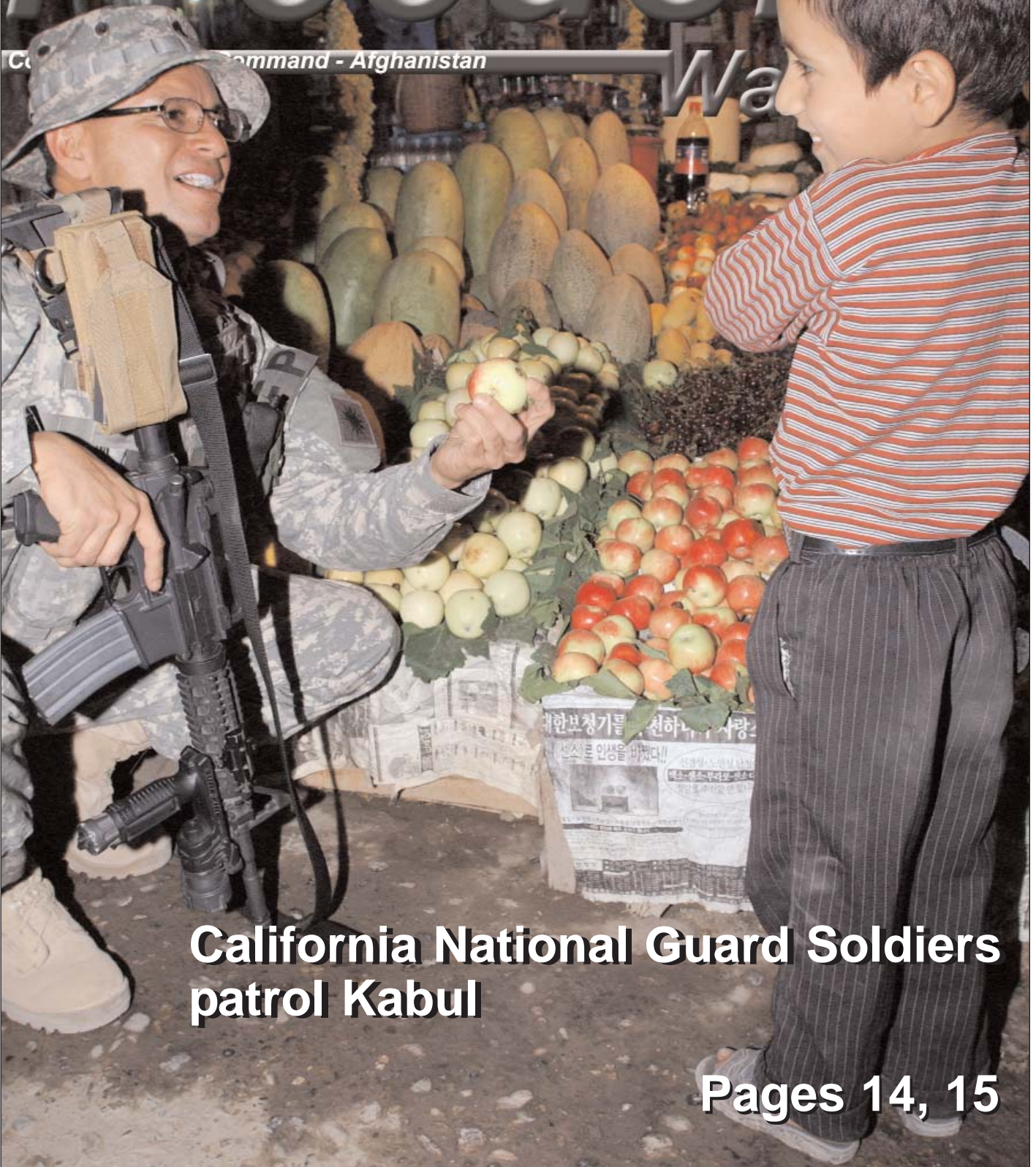
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July 24, 2006

# Afghanistan Freedom

Command - Afghanistan



**California National Guard Soldiers  
patrol Kabul**

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